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Notes on Psalm ii. 11–12 and on אֹרֶן, Isaiah xliv. 14.

PROF. J. DYNELEY PRINCE, PH.D.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

THE Masoretic Hebrew text of the last strophe, v.[10-12] of Ps. 2, is as follows:

1 ועתה מלכים השכילו	5 פן יאנף ותאבדו דרך
2 הוָסרו שפטי ארץ	6 כי יבער כמעט אפו
3 עבדו את יהוה ביראה	7 אשרי כל חוסי בו
4 וגילו ברעדה נשקו בר	

The above division into lines is necessitated by the trimeter rhythm, which is fairly constant throughout the poem. In the fourth line of the strophe two unusual expressions occur, viz. וגילו ברעדה and נשקו בר. The first of these is translated slavishly by G ἀγαλλιᾶσθε αὐτῷ ἐν τρόμῳ (V *exultate ei cum tremore*) but there is really no parallel for וגילו ברעדה which seems impossible, or, at least, very improbable. The stem גיל, cognate with Arabic *ǵâla*, means only 'go around in a circle, be excited to laughter, rejoice,' and is certainly very strange in connection with רעדה. The only other passage besides Ps. 2[11] where גיל appears in a sense different from its ordinary meaning is Hos. 10[5], where it occurs in parallelism with אבל 'mourn.' Here, however, it may well be a clerical error for חיל, as Ewald and Cheyne clearly saw. Grätz and others, following Ps. 48[7], accordingly substitute חִילוּ in Ps. 2[11], which would be a possible reading, were it not for the following נשקו בר.

The translation of this by 'kiss the son' is not impossible from a purely textual point of view. The Aramaic form בר[1] might have been used by our poet instead of the Hebrew בן, to avoid a disagreeable assonance with the following פן, especially as the Aramaic form תרעם (root רעע for Hebrew רצץ) occurs v.[9]. The existence of

[1] בר occurs also in the Aramaized Hebrew of Prov. 31[2].

the purely Heb. בן in v.[7] does not militate against this suggestion, as there would have been no reason to use a different expression in that passage. Some expositors, in fact, insist on translating 'kiss the son,' owing to the allusion to the sonship of the divinely appointed king in v.[7], but if the context of Ps. 2[12] be examined carefully, it will be seen that neither the subject of יאנף nor the person to whom the possessive suffix in אפו refers can possibly be the Son-Messiah. "Lest he be angry and ye wander on your way, for his wrath is easily kindled. Happy are all who put their trust in him." This can refer only to Jahveh Himself, whom the heathen kings are especially adjured to serve in v.[11], and not to the divinely appointed king. The translation 'son' then is clearly inadmissible from a critical point of view.

Jerome translates נשקו בר *adorate pure*,[2] which is followed by some modern commentators — notably Briggs, *Mess. Proph.*, p. 136, who renders 'and reverence with trembling, render sincere homage.' This is not satisfactory because בר occurs nowhere else as an adverb, although מר appears Is. 33[7] in the sense 'bitterly.' The stem נשק, moreover, never appears in classical Hebrew without an object: cf. Job 31[27] 1 K. 19[18] Hos. 13[2]. Turning now to G and V, we find the translation δράξασθε παιδείας *apprehendite disciplinam*, which, as Grätz saw, must presuppose a text קחו בְּמוּסָר. In his *Psalmen*, p. 158, he accordingly substitutes this for נשקו בר. This seems much too radical a change for serious consideration. The widely divergent text of G here would rather imply the existence of a different Hebrew original. Baethgen, *Psalmen*, p. 7, very ingeniously conjectures that the original of G depended on some haggadic interpretation of בר in the sense of מוסר or תורה. He advances this suggestion on the analogy of the Talmud which understood נשקו בר as 'cleave to the law,' בר = תורה.[3] Lagarde reads נשקו מוּסָרוֹ 'put on again his bonds,' referring it to the allusion in v.[3], but this is equally unsatisfactory, as נשק is never found in this sense.

It is evident that the text of this whole passage is extremely corrupt, both from the fact that the versions differ so widely from M and that it is practically impossible to get any sense from M as it stands. The verses [11-12] may be altered as indicated in the following revision of the strophe:

1 ועתה מלכים השכילו	And now, ye kings, take heed!
2 הִוָּסְרוּ שפטי ארץ	Be warned, ye rulers of earth!

[2] Cf. Sym. προσκυνήσατε καθαρῶς. Aq. καταφιλήσατε ἐκλεκτῶς.
[3] See Weber, *Altsynagogale Theologie*, p. 148.

3	עבדו את יהוה ביראה	Serve ye Jahveh with fear,
4	ונשקו לו ברעדה	And cleave to him with trembling.
5	פן יאנף ותאבדו דרך	Lest he be angry and ye wander on your way!
6	כי יבער כמעט אפו	For easily kindled is his wrath.
7	אשרי כל חסי בו	Happy are all who put their trust in Him.

The chief points to be noted are: *a*) The verb נשק, meaning 'cleave to, kiss,' is nearly always[4] construed in classical Hebrew with the preposition ל. *b*) It is possible, therefore, that the last syllable of the otherwise unsatisfactory גילו stands for an original לו. Erasing the unnecessary גי, we get לו . . . ו.[5] *c*) The next step is to transpose נשקו, so as to read ונשקו לו. The גי of גילו may possibly have arisen from dittography of קו in נשקו. *d*) This leaves ברעדה בר, of which בר may be cancelled as a dittography. This gives the perfect trimeter line וְנַשְּׁקוּ לוֹ בִּרְעָדָה, and makes the last strophe seven lines long, as are the first and third. The second has but six. The word דרך in the fifth line of the strophe may be construed as an accusative of respect dependent on תאבדו as in Dt. 32[28]: כִּי גוֹי אֹבֵד עֵצוֹת הֵמָּה.

אֶרֶן occurs twice in the Old Testament,[6] namely, Is. 44[14], in the evident sense 'fir, cedar,' and in 1 Chr. 2[25] as the name of one of the descendants of Judah. This word is plainly not a variant of the usual expression אֶרֶז, Ez. 17[23], but is a derivative from a stem ארן, which, as may be shown from the Assyrian, probably means 'to be high,' or 'strong.' There can be little doubt that אֶרֶן is a cognate of the common Assyr. *êrinu*, *êrnu*, 'cedar, fir,' which is used individually and collectively. The plant name *arantu* seems to furnish the key to the exact meaning of the stem, as it is defined in K. 271, 12, by *U. SAG. EL* 'a *high-growing* plant.' This meaning appears to be further confirmed by the existence of such forms as *irnintu* 'power, victory,' *urnatu* 'strength,' *urinnu* 'staff, sceptre (?),'[7] all of which are cognate in meaning with the idea 'high, strong.' It is probable also that the substantive *urnakku*,[8] occurring V. R. 29, 41 *e.f.* in

[4] With the accus. Prov. 24[26] 1 S. 20[41].

[5] So also Wellhausen, *Psalms*, Hebrew Text (SBOT).

[6] Cf., however, אֳרָנִים Para 3, 8 in connection with ארזים; also ארונים, probably an error for אורנים, Rosh ha-shana, 23 *a*.

[7] Cf. *irnintu*, Tig. viii. 62; *urnatu*, II. R. 31, nr. 3, 28; *urinnu* explained by *šibirru* (= *xaṭṭu*), K. 4378 c. vi. 74.

[8] *Urnakku* explained by ŠEŠ. NA. and in connection with *bîtum*, 'house,' and *ziqurrâtum*.

connection with *ziqurrâtum* 'temple-tower,' is a derivative from the same stem. I suggest, moreover, that *šûrinnu*, which appears in several passages with the apparent meaning 'pillar,'[9] may be a *shaphel* formation from ארן. It is not likely that there is any close connection between אֹרֶן = *êrinu* and אֶרֶז which is cognate with the Arab. '*arz* 'cedar,' Eth. '*arz*, Syr. ארזא, although the consonantal root אר, common to both words, may connote the idea 'high, strong.'

It is probably this tree which is represented on the monuments as bearing three cones at the end of the branch,[10] although this is clearly the fancy of the Assyrian artist.

[9] Cf. *šurinni bâbi bît Ištar*, 'pillars of the gate of the house of *Ištar*.' K. 891, Obv. 5. See *Hdwb.*, p. 691, and Delitzsch, *Assyr. Gr.*, § 65, nr. 33, for *shaphel* noun-formations.

[10] See Bonavia, *Flora of the Assyrian Monuments*, plate 25 and pp. 90–92.